

Andul Dutta Chaudhuri Chronicles is about a 'Dutta Chaudhury' *zamindar* family of *Andul* in the *district* of *Howrah*. Also familiar as the '*Chaudhuries of Andul*'. This *Dutta Chaudhuries* are said to be the *Bharadwaja Gotro kayastha(or Bramha kayastha) kannaujiya Duttas*, eventually came to known as '*Dutta Chaudhury* 'when *Nawab* of Bengal gifted the title '*Chaudhury*'.

The age-old annual *Durga Puja* festival in the month of October in Andul, is the major attraction of the family.

Origin

In an essay "*Alpines in Eastern India*", historian Kanaklal Barua writes that Alpine Aryans (an Aryan sub race descending from the Celts of Central Europe in Neolithic times) immigrated to India in the third millennium B.C. One group settled down in Central-North India, another in Gujarat, and a third group went to Bengal. Barua references another historian, Dr. B.S. Guha who, in "*Census of India, Vol I Part III, 1931*" considers *Nagar Brahmins* of Gujarat to be ethnically related to Bengali *Kayasthas*, at one time they officiated as priests of the Alpine Aryans. Mr.Guha also thinks that Bengali *Brahmins* are near cousins of Bengali *Kayasthas*.

Again, on page 182 of "*Alpines in Eastern India*", Barua reference three inscriptions dated between 7th to 8th century A.D. found in Assam, Bengal, and Orissa, in which local kings in these provinces donated lands to Brahmins whose surnames match with those of modern-day Bengali *Kayasthas* such as Ghosa (Ghosh), Dutta, Vasu (Basu), Mitra etc., thus validating the possibility of these communities being of a common Alpine Aryan heritage. Brahmins such as Mukhopadhyay, Bandhopadhyay, Chattopadhyay, Ghoshal, and Gangopadhyay came out of intermixture with Vedic Aryans or Mediterranean Aryans (descending respectively from Northern and Southern Europe) who had also migrated to India in prehistoric times. In addition to such history of a noble background, the *Kayasthas* of Bengal have done exceptionally well since the 14th century. Many became prosperous *zamindars* (landlords), educators, doctors, and reformers who significantly contributed to the Bengal Renaissance, in the fields of philosophy, literature, science and politics.

As per as Barua's historical inference is concern, the Dutta Chaudhury family of is of "Alpine Aryan" heritage.

Kannauj used to be a centre of Aryan civilization and culture, and the capital of Harsha's empire in 7th century A.D. Kannauj declined after being conquered and destroyed by Turkish tribes under Mahmud of Ghazni in 1018.

Kannauj-to-Bally

The Dutta clan came from this Kannauj, are the descendants of Purushottam Dutta who moved from Kannauj to Bengal in the 10th century A.D. ... more than 1,000 years ago. He was one of the five Kayasthas (Makaranda Ghosha, Virata Guha, Dasharatha Basu, Kalidasa Mitra, & Purusottama Dutta) who were sent by King Chandraketu of Kannauj to Bengal. They were accompanied by five Brahmins (Sriharsa Mukhopadhyay, Vattanarayan Bandhopadhyay, Daksha Chattopadhyay, Chandor Ghoshal, and Vedgarva Gangopadhyay) . King Chandraketu had sent this team in response to a request by his son-in-law, King Adisur of Bengal, whose mission as the foremost member of the Sena Dynasty was to re-establish Vedic control of his kingdom after years of Buddhist influence due to the previous rulers of the Pala dynasty.

The real motivation for King Adisur to invite the Kayasthas must have been to strengthen his administration with their talent and experience. After they came, the Ghosh, Basu, Mitra, and our DUTTA clans remained in South Bengal, while the Guhas apparently moved to East Bengal because of problems with the King. Purushottam Dutta, our ancestor, settled down at a village called Bally which is currently a town in the Howrah district of South-West Bengal (*Dakshin Rahra*), on the bank of the Bhagirathi River. Since then, his family known as *Dutta family of Bally*, and he became known as the founder of "*Kannaujiya Dutta Family of South Bengal*".

Bally-to-Kadam Dandi

Purushottam Dutta's grandsons were **Kanak Dutta** and **Nilambar Dutta**.

Nilambar stayed back in Bally, but, Kanak moved to a village known as 'Kadam Dandi' of West Midnapore in 11th century A.D. So, the *Duttas of Midnapore* became the very first off-shoot of the Dutta family of Bally. Midnapore Collegiate School, established in Midnapore in 1834, has a history of some teachers and students having participated as revolutionaries during India's struggle for independence. **Mrigen Dutta**, who became a martyr in the cause of Mother India's struggle to free herself from the tyranny of British rule, may well have been a glorious descendant of Kanak Dutta. In 12th century A.D., Ram Chandra Dutta, the great grandson of Kanak, moved to a place called „Chatra“ in Hooghly district. There is an 18th century (~ 1723 A.D.) Radha-Damodar temple with terracotta plaques located in a small courtyard of the Dutta family residence of Dutta-para, Joypur. The temple is dedicated to of Vishnu, Kali, and Damodar.

Ballal Sen's kulinism

Narayan Dutta (7th descendant of Purushottam, from Nilambar's lineage) from Bally, started attending the Sena court of Ballal Sen and Lakshman Sen. Now, Ballal Sen was the one who injected the concept of "*Kulinism*" into the caste system of the Brahmins and Kayasthas of Bengal who had migrated from Kannauj at the invitation of King Adisur. So, all five Kannaujiya Brahmins and Kannaujiya Kayasthas were initially declared as "*Kulin*"; the highest level in the social hierarchy. Later, young Narayan Dutta became a victim of caste politics in Ballal Sen's court. Narayan, though unsophisticated, was proud of his heritage. In the court, he expressed his independence by saying that he was not a servant of the Brahmins. The Brahmins conspired to take revenge on Narayan, and compelled Ballal Sen to deny "*Kulin*" status to this Dutta family. Duttas remained identified as "*kayastha*". However, Narayan Dutta continued to be respected as a leader of the society. Because of their common history of immigration from Kannauj, the Ghosh, Basu, and Mitra *kulin* families even to this day treat the Duttas as one of their own for purposes of social and family relationships.

Bally-to-Andul

Murari Dutta, the great grandson of Narayan Dutta, had two sons – **Ganapati Dutta** and **Tekari Dutta**. Ganapati, moved to a place called "Halisahar".

Tekari Dutta (12th man from Purushottam Dutta) moved from Bally to Andul and established his residence in the 14th century. Tekari had inherited enough capital from his father to be able to acquire the extensive property of Muzzaffarpur Pargana, and become established as the first *zamindar* of Andul. "*Pargana*" is a word of Persian origin, used as an administrative unit by the

Muslim rulers of India. In 1793 the British abolished *pargana* system in favour of the *zamindari* system, in which *zamindars* were made the absolute owners of rural lands. His residence was said to have been built on 252 *bighas* of land. He was later awarded the title of “**Chaudhury**” by the contemporary *Nawab* of Bengal; most probably Ghiasuddin Azam Shah. Tekari's lineage from then began to known as the ‘Dutta Chaudhury’ family of Andul. So, this family became the second off-shoot of the Dutta family of Bally, and through the years established connections with many other *bonedi baris* or aristocratic families of Calcutta. Many a times, Raja Radhakanta Deb Bahadur attended 'Dharma-Sabha" with Golok Chandra Dutta Chaudhury (grand-son of **Srimanta Dutta Chaudhury**, founder of the Royal Family of Dinajpur, familiar as *Dinajpur Rajbari*) along with the Bhubaneswar Kar of the “*Kar-Roy*”s of Andul (*Andul Rajbari*).

In the 16th century, **Madhav Ram Dutta**, the elder of Krishnananda's two sons, moved to a place call,Choa, Murshidabad because he got a good job in the administration of the Nawab of Bengal. So, the DUTTAs of Murshidabad became the first off-shoot of the DUTTA CHAUDHURY family of Andul. Also in the 16th century, **Kandarpa Ram Dutta Chaudhury**, inherited his father's *zamindari*. He had three sons – **Ram Sharan, Gobinda Sharan and Hari Sharan**, who were constantly at loggerheads with each other regarding the distribution of ancestral property.

Ramsharan Dutta Chaudhury, Kandarpa Ram's eldest son, stayed back in Andul. He had six sons – Mahesh Chandra, Shiv Ram, **Jagannath**, Parvati Charan, Param Chand and **Kashiswar**. Due to the apparent atrocities committed on his property and belongings by his younger brother Gobinda Sharan, Ram Sharan suffered considerable loss in self-esteem. He could not recover from the shock, and passed away. Kashiswar Dutta Chaudhury was still in his mother's womb when his father Ram Sharan passed away. When Kashiswar was 17 years old, Mughal Prince Shah Jahan happened to be traveling by boat along the Saraswati River while returning from a visit to Orissa. Kashiswar was sighted by the prince's attendants. He was waiting at the river front with an appeal written in Farsi to be submitted to the Prince. It was an appeal for help, describing his ancestral background, mentioning how his family was in dire straits because of the evil deeds perpetuated by his uncle Gobinda Sharan. Shah Jahan beckoned Kashiswar, accepted his appeal, and was so moved by what he read that he immediately ordered the lost estates to be returned back to Kashiswar's family. Kashiswar was able to get back his ancestral properties, and he lived happily ever after with his family as well as with his brothers and their families.

Srimanta Dutta Chaudhury

Srimanta Dutta Chaudhury (1608-1640), a great-grandson of Ram Sharan Dutta Chaudhury is the founder of the Royal Family of Dinajpur. It is said that two decades prior to the rule of Mughal Emperor Akbar, a King named Ganesh had gifted the land of Dinajpur to one of his nearest relatives, Kashi, who had no inclination towards worldly possessions & consequently became a sanyasi. Kashi donated the entire Dinajpur Estate to his kayastha disciple Srimanta Dutta Chaudhury, who became the patriarch of Royal Family of Dinajpur.

Since his son was said to have passed away prematurely. Srimanta was succeeded by his daughter's son Sukdev Roy, who extended his estate considerably beyond what he inherited from his maternal grandfather. Sukdev was conferred the title of “*Raja*” in 1677, apparently by Emperor Aurangzeb.

Srimanta had three sons of which Rajib Lochan, Ramchand and Biswambar.

“*Dinajpur Rajbari*” is now in ruins, but a Krishna temple inside the palace complex is still maintained; situated on the north-east outskirts of the present town.

Anil Krishna Chaudhuri

Bijoy Krishna Dutta Chaudhuri (from Kashiwar's lineage), who is considered to be a first doctor of this zamindar family, in 1917 AD moved to his new home at Annada Banerjee Lane (*Near Jadubabu Bazar*), Bhawanipore, Kolkata- 700020.

His elder son, Anil Chaudhuri (born as Anil Krishna Dutta Chaudhury) had his schooling from **Mitra Institution**, Bhawanipore from where he completed his Matriculation probably around 1917. He was a researcher & professor in the fields of Pathology, Bacteriology, Pharmacology, and Tropical Medicine at several medical institutions of Kolkata. Dr. Anil Chaudhuri used to keep guinea pigs and rabbits at his home in Bhawanipore; not only as pets but also as subjects for his research in the development of vaccines for patients. At the start of his medical practice, he served as assistant to the renowned physician and freedom fighter Dr. Bidhan Chandra Roy, who was Chief Minister of West Bengal from 1948 to 1962.

It is said that in one occasion, Mahatma Gandhi was on fast in Kolkata, probably during one of the pre-partition riots. Gandhiji was resting at Dr. Roy's house or at some other place, but Dr. Roy had the responsibility of monitoring the Mahatma's health. A blood test was needed, and Dr. Roy instructed Anil Chaudhuri to draw the blood sample and get it tested. A syringe in hand, proceeded to draw the sample from Gandhiji who was lying down; resting. The weather was hot and humid; typical of summer in Kolkata. As Dr. Anil Chaudhuri nervously bent down to draw the blood sample, a drop of his sweat that had formed at his chin obeyed the law of gravity, and fell onto the Mahatma's face. Gandhiji looked up at him, smiled, and exclaimed "*This is Bengal!*"

Dr. Anil Chaudhuri was a founding director of Metropolitan Laboratory & Nursing Home at 18, Shakespeare Sarani, Park Street, Kolkata-700016, in-charge of the Laboratory, which is one of the oldest private healthcare establishments of Kolkata. He became known for his vaccines based on diagnostic testing of the patient's pathological samples. It is said that his vaccines would cure ailments that were resistant to standard commercial medication.

Dr. Anil Chaudhuri retired in the year around 1970, as Head of the Department of Pathology, R.G. Kar Medical College and Hospital at 1, Kshudiram Bose Sarani, Kolkata-700004, where he had worked for many years. He was a lot more devoted to teaching medical students, and working at his laboratory, than to private practice of medicine as a doctor.

Bashanta Chaudhury

Basanta Chaudhury was a member of this Dutta Chaudhury family of Andul. He was the eldest son of Shiddeshwar & Kamala Dutta Chaudhury, and spent his early life in Nagpur where he had his schooling and college education. His family later returned to Andul, but subsequently Basanta moved to live at Ranikuthi in Tollygunj of Kolkata so as to be close to the studios where he worked. Prasanta Chaudhury was his younger brother, who used to visit Durga Puja of his Andul family during "*Maha- Asthami*" and contribute. Chandi Chaudhury, a close relative of them stayed back in Andul.

It is said that an ancestral distant relative in Andul had covertly sold Basanta's family property for the construction of the Andul School without consulting him or his brother. The same relative was then the organizer of the family's annual *Durga Puja* in Andul, and all this caused enough unhappiness to stop Basanta from attending the puja for several years. However, being intimately close to

Bonobehari Dutta Chaudhury, he later resumed attending the *pujas* on being persuaded by Bonobehari to do so. Basanta had been suffering from lung cancer for quite some time, but there is a terribly sad story of constant misdiagnosis by his doctor who wrongly sent him to undergo prostate surgery. Since there was no improvement in his condition after that, several tests were run by other doctors, but the correct diagnosis came in too late. He passed away in June 2000.

He has two sons- Srinjoy and Sanjeet. Both of them live in Delhi, at present.

Akhsay Chandra Chaudhury

Akshay Chandra was intimate with the Tagore family and a friend of Debendranath Tagore. He later became the house-tutor of Rabindranath Tagore.

But people often confused him with Akshay Kumar Dutta, who was from Brahmo Samaj, and was also close to the Tagore household.

Krishnananda Dutta Chaudhury and Kirtan-Movement

Tekari Dutta's great-grandson and son of Kamdev was **Krishnananda Dutta** (born as Krishnananda Dutta Chaudhury), which is not to be mistaken with 'Raja' Krishnananda Dutta. Raja Krishnananda Dutta was the king of Gopalpura town and Krishnananda Dutta Chaudhury was the zamindar of Andul. Some often get confused easily, as both these names are relate with Nityananda Mahaprabhu.

Krishnananda Dutta Chaudhury initiated into the *Brahma-Krishna Naam Mantra* by the *Vaishnava* saint Prabhu Nityananda used to worship his ancestral family deity, Sri Sri Radha-Madhava in his home in Andul. Chaitanya Mahaprabhu went to Andul & got a big reception from Krishnananda. After his retirement from family affairs, passed on all his possessions to his son, Kandarpa Ram Dutta Chaudhury, to become an ascetic at Puri where he took his ancestral family deity, *Shri Shri Radha-Madhava* with him. Now this deity is kept in a place called Chotti in Orissa.

Krishnananda Dutta Chaudhury is the founder of *Chandul-Math*.

Andul-to-Gobindapur

Gobinda Sharan Dutta Chaudhury severed ties with Andul, and went over to a place called "*Badar Rasa*" somewhere in South Calcutta to establish his residence. It is believed that "*Badar Rasa*" eventually expanded to become "*Gobindapur*", named after Gobinda Sharan. **Hari Sharan Dutta Chaudhury** got a government job and moved to a place called "*Barada*" in Muragachha Pargana" near Sonarpur; about 60 kilometres from Diamond Harbour within the present-day district of South 24 Parganas.

Gobindapur-to-Hatkhola

Apparently in his book "*Digvijay Prakash*", Kaviram had written that Gobinda Sharan Dutta Chaudhury used to live like a king in Gobindapur.

Of the descendants of Gobinda Sharan , it was Ram Chandra Dutta and his descendants who moved from Gobindapur to Chitpur and his descendants were came to known as *Duttas of Chitpur*. Madan Mohan Dutta moved from Chitpur to a place called *Jora-Shivtola*, and Jagat Ram Dutta moved to Jorabagan area of NG Street. This general locality is called Hatkhola, and so these families became known as the *Duttas of Hatkhola*. The 'Duttas' have discontinued using "*Chaudhury*" in their surname.

Shyamal Dhon Dutta, a solicitor of High Court, moved from the Hatkhola ancestral house to his own purchased home at 159, *Balaram De Street*. So, he and his descendants were another off-shoot of the Hatkhola Dutta family.

One from the Hatkhola Dutta was Kali Prasad Dutta, a cousin brother of Abhay Charan Dutta, father-in-law of Raj Narayan Basu. Kali Prasad had developed an amorous relationship with a Muslim woman, accepted conversion to Islam in order to make her happy, and one or two children were born. This enraged the Hindu community, and Kali Prasad was ostracized. The lady passed away soon thereafter, and so Kali Prasad became anxious to get re-accepted into the Hindu community. Some leaders of the community were opposed towards pardoning him, but eventually all was well because of the initiative by Ramdulal Sirkar and Santosh Roy Chaudhury.

The Kalighat Temple at Calcutta was erected under the patronage of the Kali Prasad Dutta, with the help of Santosh Roy Chaudhury of *Sabarna Roy Chaudhury family* of Barisha, Kolkata. Kali Prasad Dutta had given Rs.25, 000/- to Santosh Roy Chaudhury to support construction of the temple. The amount was almost all of the Rs.30, 000/- that was spent. The temple was completed in the year of 1809 AD by Santosh Roy Chaudhury and his grandson, and so the *Sabarna Roy Chaudhury family* became the owners of this temple. The members of *Halder* family became the hereditary organizers of worship. In the 1960s, a committee was formed for the administrative management of the temple with representation from the Government.

Cultural Festival

- 1) Dutta Chaudhury family residing in Andul have indicated that previously they used to worship Mother *Durga* in an "*Atchala*" structure sometime before 1609 AD. This is as per their family history handed down the generations by the spoken word. *Durga Puja* used to be carried out in accordance with *Tantric* requirements during the earlier days, till it was stopped probably when Krishnananda Dutta Chaudhury became a full-fledged *Vaishnava* due to the influence of Shri Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu and Shri Nityananda Prabhu. Eventually it was Kashiswar Dutta Chaudhury who, by the grace of Mughal prince Shah Jahan, was able to recover from his uncle most of what was taken. He re-established the traditional worship of their Mother Durga in the year 1609 AD in a new *Chandi-Mandap*, at Chaudhury Para lane (*Near Andul Shiddeshwari Tola*), Howrah- 711302 in accordance with the traditional requirements of the *Brihannandikeshwara Purana*. The *Chandi-Mandap* built by Kashiswar unfortunately collapsed around the year 1929 A.D., but his descendants took no time in getting a new one constructed and functioning within a year.

Durga Puja of this family is also familiar as '*Andul Dutta Chaudhury Barir Durga Puja*' and is considered one among the oldest in the state of Bengal.

- 2) Jagat Ram Dutta, with roots in Dutta Chaudhury family of Andul, initiated *Durga Puja* and *Kali Puja* in their "*Thakur Dalan*" since the year of 1794 A.D at 78/4 Nimtala Ghat Street, Jorabagan (Near Jorabagan Police Station), Kolkata- 700006.

This house is also known by the name of '*Hatkholā Dutta Bari*'.

- 3) Shymal Dhon Dutta, a member of the Hathkhola Duttas, after settling in Balaram De Street of North Kolkata started *Durga Puja* in the year of 1882 AD, at 159-Balaram De Street (Near Girish Park Metro Station), Kolkata – 700006. Shymal Dhon had two daughters. The younger one was married to a *kayastha* 'Ghosh' family of *Soukalin* gotro, who later inherited the property at some point of time, but they have continued the tradition of celebrating the *puja* without interruption in Shymal Dhon Dutta's house. They also have *Kali Puja*.

This house is also known by the name '*Balaram De Street er Dutta Bari*'.

Present Day

Nowadays, very few Dutta Chaudhury families continue to reside in Andul. New houses owned by others have sprung up where a lot of Purushottama Dutta's descendants once used to live and many of some Dutta Chaudhuries have moved to some other places in Kolkata; many of them had immigrated to different states in United States of America.

Even the original "*Chaudhury Para Bus Stop*" is now more familiarly known as "*Mukherjee Para Bus Stop*". Of the few original families that still live there, one must mention the families of Bonobehari Dutta Chaudhury (descendant from Jagganath, third s/o Ramsharan Dutta Chaudhury), who have preserved the tradition of celebrating at Kashiswar's *Chandi Mandap* the annual *Durga puja* by following the scriptures.

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